

## FRANÇOIS CLOUET

French school, active by 1536 --died 1572.

François Clouet --also known as Janet, like his artist-father Jean Clouet (who worked for Charles I<sup>of France</sup>) --was born in Tours. He is first mentioned in 1540, the year of his father's death, as an excellent continuer of the latter's art and as successor to his father's title of "painter and valet of the king's bedchamber". It would appear that he was already active in his father's lifetime (since he is said to have made a death-mask of the Dauphin Francis, who died in 1536), and he was most probably trained by his father and may well have collaborated with him. He was naturalized on November 27, 1541. He subsequently worked for Henry II, Francis II and Charles IX. He did mythological subjects as well as portraits, and evidently directed a large workshop which produced enamel designs, miniatures and decorations for the triumphal entries of the kings, as well as oil-paintings and drawings. He died on September 22, 1572.

Because he and his father bore the same name, Janet, confusion between their works arose early on. In the case of François, there are two signed paintings of his : Lady at the Bath (Cook collection, Richmond) and Portrait of Pierre Quthhe, dated 1562 (Louvre). Attributions to him have to be based on these two works, and on two drawings for oil-portraits which were ascribed to him at an early date.<sup>①</sup> Some sixty further drawings can be associated with those two to form a group, and some of them in turn served as the preparatory studies for corresponding oil-portraits. In some of his portraits François appears to have adapted the half-length type of portrait introduced into France by his father, and in others to have produced a variation of a less formal kind on the Italian portrait.

### Portrait of François de Scepeaux

oil on canvas, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

Dated 1566 (top right).

Provenance

× Early provenance uncertain.<sup>(2)</sup> Acquired by Dr Clowes  
in 19 .

Exhibited

Ind., 1959, no.14

Versions

1. Drawing, British Museum, London, dated 1566 (E. Moreau-Nélaton, Les Clouet et leurs Emules, 3 vols., Paris, 1924, I, fig.26 ; III, p.129, no.62).
2. Musée de Versailles, no.3220. 32 x 22 cm. (Moreau-Nélaton, III, p.263, no.49). From the Gagnières colln.
3. Musée de Besançon. 31 x 18 cm. (1886 cat., no.295 ; presented to the Museum by Pintard<sup>(3)</sup>). The order there is a star. The right arm differs beyond the sleeve, the collar has an indentation pattern along the edges ; otherwise identical.

François de Scepeaux, Sire de Villeville, was born in 1509-10 and died in 1571. He served as marshal of France and ambassador.

This portrait of him was probably done from the British Museum drawing (see under versions), since the date appears at the top right here also. It appears to be equal, if not superior in quality to the Besançon version, and can best be attributed on this double basis to the studio of Clouet<sup>(4)</sup>— on the assumption that Clouet made only the drawing himself.

Notes

1. See C. Sterling, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <sup>New York,</sup> Catalogue of French Paintings, XV -XVII Centuries, Cambridge, Mass.. 1955, p.53 for these portraits.

Notes, cont.

2. It was said at the time of acquisition to have belonged to the sitter himself, and to have descended to Jean de Scepeaux ; but this is unconfirmed.

3. Ascribed to F.Clouet in this cat., but now attrib. to the "Maître de Luxembourg". On a photograph of this work in the Frack Art Ref.Lib. there is a note by Sterling (1962) : "attributed to Clouet".

4. As suggested by Sir A.Blunt to the compiler (orally, 1965).